THE PERIOD 1926-1939

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At the end of the 1920's the Soviets decided to collectivize the nomads of Central Asia, by which they meant causing them to settle down in collective farms. The first Five-Year Plan envisaged settling 383,000 of these nomadic households by 1933. By 1930, 50,000 nomadic Kazakh households were so immobilized, but 567,000 out of 829,000 households, or 67 per cent, were still nomadic. During the following year, 95,000 more households were transferred from nomadism to farming and other sedentary occupations. In 1932 an intensive drive was started to collectivize the nomadic herdsmen as well, but without compulsory sedentarization; collectivization no longer meant settling down.

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Apparently, many of those nomads who had been sedentarized in the first Five-Year Plan did not remain on the farms. Kazakhs traditionally abhorred farming. They regarded it as woman's work, as work of the poor and of those who could not make a success of herding. For a man to become a farmer meant loss of status, loss of manhood and virility. The Sarts, for example, a farming and trading people of Central Asia composed of former herdsmen, were despised by the nomads. Only half of those households which had been announced as collectivized remained so. In 1934, it was announced that only 76,000 households of the 145,000 noted above had been permanently settled in 1932. Between 1933 and 1935 slightly under 200,000 households were added to this roll, making a total of about one quarter of a million households which had been sedentarized. In addition, there was some movement of nomad households across the border into other republics or into China. In 1935 there were 158,000 fully nomadic Kazakh households, as compared with 567,000 five years earlier.

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The total number of those employed in Kazakhstan in 1931 was 495,100, of whom 125,100 were in agriculture. By 1935 the total figure had risen to 585,700, and the agricultural component to 165,800. The total figure rose to about 700,000 in 1937 and to 820,000 in 1940.

There were 16,184 persons employed in industry in Kazakhstan in 1927, of whom 20.8 per cent were Kazakhs. In 1933, the number of industrial workers had risen to 56,484; of these, 23,784, or 42.1 per cent, were Kazakhs. At the end of 1934, the total was 71,627, of whom 29,022 or 40.5 per cent were Kazakhs.

K 161

The total population of Kazakhs was reported in 1926 as 3,968,289; in 1939 their number was given as 3,098,764. They had thus lost in absolute terms about 900,000 people between the two censuses, or approximately 22 per cent of their number in 1926. In the same period, the population of the entire USSR had increased by 15.9 per cent. It has been argued that under normal conditions the Kazakh rate of increase would have been higher than the average for the USSR as a whole. (The populations of the neighboring republics of Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, for instance, which are composed of ethnic groups similar to the Kazakhs, have increased at a rate much higher than that of the entire USSR.) At any rate, if the Kazakhs had increased only at the USSR average rate, they would have numbered about 4,500,000 in 1939. Thus their real loss

161 may be estimated at approximately 1,400,000, if one adds to the actual loss of 900,000 the expected natural increase of 500,000.

A number of arguments have been advanced to account for both the 648 actual and the estimated losses. Each has a certain merit, and no single one of them should be pursued at the expense of all the others.

[167] The Soviet explanation is that people from Kazakhstan moved away to the new industrial enterprises of the southern Urals and southern Siberia and to the neighboring Central Asia republics, the Uzbek, Tadzhik, Turkmen, and Kirgiz SSR's. This interpretation has not been accompanied by any data. The figures quoted here have been the totals of those listed as Kazakhs in the USSR censuses regardless of place of residence. Therefore, the Soviet statement must mean not only that hundreds of thousands of Kazakhs migrated from Kazakhstan to other parts of the USSR, but also that they gave up their Kazakh nationality in doing so.

[197] This may be part of the story but it cannot be the whole. It is known that the Russians looked with favor on the Russification of native populations and their absorption into the Russian ethnic group, regardless of their forebears. German and Austrian prisoners of war who were sent to Kazakhstan report that many Kazakhs, identifiable by their physiognomy, by their personal and family names, and by their own account of 161 their past, were nevertheless designated Russian in their official papers. 648 But certainly 900,000 of them did not become Russian.

During the course of collectivization many Kazakhs were liquidated [474] by the GPU, primarily during the period between the two censuses. [565] Those liquidated were people who resisted collectivization, but they were listed as remnants of the former nobility and wealthy people of Kazakhstan. This class was known as the feudal bays. About 700 bay families per year were liquidated, that is turned over to the GPU, during the three-year period 1928-1930. In 1931 it was announced that 23,000 households of bays were to be liquidated. This made an announced total of 25,000 households subject to GPU measures. If all these people were actually liquidated (that is, left to starve or otherwise badly treated), then some 125,000 Kazakhs were eliminated by these means. This is the largest figure for population losses that can be assigned to police measures on the basis of published data.

[233] It has been stated that between 1930 and 1935, at the height of the [162] drive for collectivization, the number of Kazakh households engaged in the traditional herding occupation dropped from 567,000 to 158,000. Many of these households went into agriculture and some into industry [167] in Kazakhstan, but others moved across the border, either into neighboring republics or out of the Soviet realm into bordering China. During the 1920's and the first part of the 1930's considerable cross-border movement was still permitted into China and back, according to age-old nomadic patterns. The border was closed in the mid-1930's, and possibly some Kazakhs remained outside the USSR by choice; for example, there is a colony of approximately 30,000 Kazakhs in Outer Mongolia. However, to assign numbers to the population loss in Soviet Kazakhstan through this cross-border movement is a hopeless task.

Again, no reliable estimate has been given for the number of Kazakhs who might have gone over to the neighboring republics within the Soviet Union.

These apparent contradictions arise because Kazakh society is an amalgam of kin and political relationships. 182

Soviet writers in Central Asia find it difficult to explain the inconsistencies in Kazakh society; this difficulty is due in part to the series of readymade categories of evolution which Communism teaches. They are dealing not with abstractions but with living people, whose lives are complex. The Kazakhs have lived on the margins of great empires—Persian, Chinese, Russian—for many centuries. They themselves have participated in great empires, their own and others. Not only the glory, but some of the institutions, have rubbed off on them; they have developed certain institutions which are normally part of states and empires. At times they have formed states and empires, and at times they have contracted to form smaller units. 177

During the 1920's, a group of Kazakh intellectuals, together with certain romantically disposed Russians, constructed a picture of Kazakh society in which each social unit formed a closely-knit cooperative core. All members of a village helped each other, since all were united by ties of blood and neighborhood. The Kazakh intellectuals included former leaders, such as Baitursunov and Bukeikhanov, of the Alash-Orda, the Kazakh political party of the period 1917-1922. Ryskulov and Sadvokasov, also Kazakhs, propounded the same idea; the Russian scholars Polochanskii, Kushner, and, as late as 1933, Fedorov continued along the same line.[1] 829 [668]

With the onset of collectivization, the Soviet government could no longer let these theories continue unopposed. In 1928 Moscow began to denounce the notion of the persistence of primeval communist conditions among the Kazakhs into the era of the Russian Revolution. The Soviet boss of Kazakhstan, Goloshchekin, attacked the concept of the Kazakh nomadic village as a communal, cooperative, undifferentiated whole. Between 1928 and 1930 the government of Kazakhstan handed over each year to the GPU hundreds of Kazakh families classified as enemies of the workers. The campaign to exterminate the rich Kazakhs as exploiters of the poor intensified between 1930 and 1933. The aim of this campaign was to bring the Kazakh herdsman into collective farm life, to settle him down as a tiller of the soil, as well as to find the equivalents among the Kazakhs of the rich peasants of Russia. The aul was equated by Goloshchekin with a peasant village anywhere; the wealthy Kazakh villager was equated with the Kulak, and thus regarded as subject to liquidation.[2] 177 698 [474]

This policy became the official line, and the forces advocating the theory of communal economy and polity were silenced. One theory advanced in support of the new line stated that the Tsarist colonialists supported the village leaders as a counterpoise to the khans and the sultans, and used the local leader as a lever to crush the rule of the khans. According to this theory, the khans were of foreign birth and the village leaders, pictured as allies of the Tsars, were of Kazakh birth.[3]

[1] Tegshasov, 1954, pp. 6-8, 33.
[2] Goloshchekin, 1931, pp. 177-198, 208.
[3] Tegshasov, 1954, pp. 38-39.

621 kolkhoz. On the other hand, those Kazakhs who have changed from herding to farming live in villages which are no longer kin communities. The background of this differentiation antedates the Revolution, and is an important part of Kazakh developments during the last hundred years.

648 In the period from 1850 to 1917 the Russians gradually took over
197 the more fertile sections of the steppe in the north, especially along lake shores and river banks, and in mountain piedmont. This left less steppe, and less fertile steppe, for the rapidly increasing Kazakh population. The impoverished Kazakhs were impelled to take up agriculture, which requires less territory per individual than does herding; in regions having sufficient annual rainfall to support cultivation, farming is a more efficient use of the land and hence permits greater density of population. Where the Kazakhs were thus forced to take up agriculture, they tended to break up the kinship units. The agricultural villages are
621 larger than the nomadic, and are composed of broken clans, broken lineages, villages, and families.

Many Kazakh communities survived this impact and managed to maintain their herding pattern, usually in conjunction with a certain minimum amount of farming, which was done in the vicinity of the winter camp by the women and the poor. Communities of this kind comprise the norm to this day; farming among such villages and kolkhozy is largely concerned with raising feed for the livestock. These communi-
● 474 ties have, as a general rule, gone over bodily into the collective farm
621 system. One such collective farm is the Belbasar Kolkhoz in the Dzhambul region, in the valley of the Chu River. This farm is composed of 116 households; of these 100 are Kazakh, all of the same lineage, the Akhsha lineage of the Dulat clan of the Great Horde. Of the remaining
[563] households, 13 are Azerbaijani, two are Russian, and one is a Kazakh who came to this kolkhoz from the Middle Horde in 1942 as a blacksmith. The head of one of the Russian families is a carpenter, the other a kolkhoz leader.[1]

This collective farm in the south appears in striking contrast to those in the north, in the farming zone of the Semipalatinsk region, for example, where Kazakh clan and lineage affiliations are mixed and confused. The Kazakhs of southeast Kazakhstan know their horde and clan affiliations; they are all of the Great Horde, and of one of four clans. Korbe compiled a list of 11 collective farms in this area in which the core population consisted of members of a specific lineage of a specific clan. It thus seems clear that in this part of Kazakhstan the anvil upon which the collective farm pattern was hammered out was the descent group and the kin village. Here, then, is a Kazakh institution which served as a means of accommodation to the Soviet pattern.[2]

The kin village and lineage were the channels through which the Kazakh herdsmen passed into the collective farm life. That the passage was made indicates the force which these institutions have even today.

621 The traditional function of the nomadic village was to organize the annual movements of the member families as a collective enterprise

[1]Korbe, 1950, p. 71.
[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

under the direction of the village leader. The leader and the elders decided all questions concerning village activities. The administration of justice was in the hands of the elders, while the enforcement of decisions was a common village enterprise; thus the village peace was kept. The raw framework of the village collectivity moved as a unit into the Soviet era.

The Kazakh lineage supplied the basis for the practice of marrying outside the group. The lineage occupied a common territory, and during the course of the past century the unit of common residence rather than the unit of descent and kinship has served to regulate marriage. Wives are sought outside the village; girls leave their native villages to join their husband's people, although this may not involve moving a great distance. The lineage is today generally identical with the village, and under the Soviet regime, with the collective farm. There is today the practice of kolkhoz exogamy.[1]

The practice of polygamy has likewise proved compatible with Soviet conditions. In former times, the many-wived family was the family of the well-born, the rich, the influential; today, the many-wived family is that of the village leader, the kolkhoz president, the brigade foreman. The leviratic marriage of the widow to the brother of the deceased or to another close kinsman has also accommodated itself to Soviet conditions, within the framework of the extended family, for among the peoples of the steppe this practice depends upon and reinforces the extended family structure. In Kazakhstan, the extended family rests on the close integration of several fraternal households and the conjugal families of a father and his sons and at times even grandsons.

The Soviet ideological campaign has directed attention to the practice of polygamy among leading elements in Kazakh collective farms; similarly, a number of reports indicate that leviratic marriage is still practiced. Soviet ethnographers do not discuss these institutions from the standpoint of the functions of the Kazakh extended family and the Kazakh village community. Instead, they have made a political issue out of what they are pleased to call the survival of the feudal mores. But they choose to ignore the fact that the practices which they condemn are part and parcel of the existing family and village system.

The status of women in Kazakhstan is a serious question to Soviet ideologists. In 1944, in 1949, and again in 1951, the Kazakh Party leadership was briefed by the Central Committee in Moscow regarding the participation of Kazakhs, of Kazakh women, and of literate and educated people in the Kazakh Communist Party (see Chapter 6, which deals with the Party). That the program has evidently fallen short of plan is suggested by the repetition of the instructions. The Kazakhs are not coming forward for training in Party work, despite the fact that they are periodically encouraged to do so, and despite the prestige and material advantages of Party membership. And the women lag behind the men in this respect.

Woman's position in Kazakh society, and the Soviet failure to understand the background of this position, has important consequences in the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

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female backwardness has not yet been overcome. The Kazakh women are not moving in the direction of Soviet goals at a pace with the rest of society; they are as far behind the men in this matter as the Kazakh men are behind the Slavic peoples of Kazakhstan in accepting the Soviet way of life.

The place of Kazakh women in the economy is in the farming sector and in specific aspects of herding, primarily as milkmaids. In fact, they are the basic labor force of the collective farms. In the chapter on Kazakh social organization some of the ramifications of this division of labor were examined. The fact in the economic picture remains as one Soviet authority has put it: "The greater proportion of the 233 kolkhoz members capable of work are women. Women are now the basic labor force in the kolkhozy of Kazakhstan generally. This is accounted for first of all by the increasing role of women in kolkhoz production, and also by the greater number of men leaving the kolkhoz for industry, transport, the cities, the Soviet administration, schooling, etc."[1]

A broad conclusion from the survey of urbanization as a world-wide phenomenon indicates that men proceed to the cities first, and are followed by women after a time lag which may extend over years. The Soviet Union's urbanization pattern is no exception. Women are the basic labor force in rural areas in the Soviet Union generally, and there has been a flight of men from the farms. In Kazakh society there is the additional factor of the unwillingness of men to take up farming. Although the women are the basic rural labor force, they are underrepresented in farm leadership, from brigade leaders to collective farm presidents. This same pattern will emerge from study of the figures for literacy, higher education, and Party work: nonparticipation of Kazakh women, or participation at a lower rate than among men.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in present-day Kazakhstan falls roughly into four categories:

(1) Grain
(2) Truck farming
(3) "Technical crops," including cotton, sugar beets, hemp, olives, tea, and tobacco
(4) Farming in conjunction with herding, with emphasis on livestock feed

Most of the cultivated land is in grain for human and animal consumption, as shown in Table 3.

The total area under cultivation in Kazakhstan increased in the decade 1942-52 by 4,000,000 hectares or 36 per cent. The area in grain increased by only 19 per cent, and the proportion of the total area in grain fell from 93 to 73 per cent. This drop is accounted for by the increase in area devoted to truck farming (largely a wartime development) and to a lesser degree by an increase in "technical crops." The

[1] Kazakhstan, 1956, p. 71.